sake, referring to him those zealous students who would exercise themselves therein.

I WILL content myself with the reason I have given, that the Cross, inasmuch as it is formed of a perpendicular and a horizontal line, is the foundation for designing and making all our said Attic letters, as I shall prove by example and figure, with Our Lord's aid.

THE writing of three A's rather than two, or four, signifies, I say again, some felicity; for the number of the Trinity is odd, & of all numbers the noblest & most perfect. It is made of an even & odd number, & their sum is odd. Virgil in his *Bucolics* has said: *Numero Deus impare gaudet.** 'Divine things,' he says, 'must be of an odd number.' Likewise we have in our blessed faith, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, all which three taken together we believe to be one God, and equal in power. So our three A's have but one sound, as a syllable and as a word. To show us this blessed Trinity & happy repetition, the good Prophet Jeremiah says in his first chapter: *A, A, A, Domine Deus, ecce, nescio loqui, quia puer ego sum.*† 'A, A, A,' he says, 'my Lord God, thou seest that I cannot speak, for I am only a child.' When a child is born, the first sound he makes contains in it, so 'tis said, this letter A, and this is why our ancient fathers placed it first in the order of letters, rather than M, or S, or any other of them all. I could give many another strong argument in this regard, but let him who shall desire to know, read Plutarch's *Symposiacs,* the ninth Decade,[40] and he will satisfy his mind, if it is easily satisfied.

* VIII, 75.

† *Tory, of course, quotes from the Vulgate. In the King James version we find* (1:6): '*Ah! Lord God!*' *etc.*

A Is called in Greek *Alpha,* and is oftentimes, as well in Holy Writ as in the poets, put for beginning. In the twenty-first and penultimate chapter of the Apocalypse, are the words *Ego sum Alpha et ω,*‡ that is to say, in Latin, *Ego sum initium et finis;* and in French, *Ie suis le commancemant et la fin.* And in the last chapter, *Ego sum Alpha et ω, primus et nouissimus, principium et finis.* 'I am,' he says, 'Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.'§ Alpha, then is used for beginning, and for this reason A is put first in the alphabetical order of letters, which thing he who denies it can see in Plato.

‡ *Revelation,* XXI, 6.

§ *Ibid,* XXII, 13.

THere is yet another hidden reason why Alpha signifies beginning; & this is that the Greeks reckon & form their numbers by letters; the said letters, as is the case too in Hebrew, serving as figures and symbols of numbers to reckon with. Alpha (A) is put for the first number and for one; Vita ℣ (B), for two; Gamma (Γ) for three; Delta (Δ), for four; Epsilon (E), for five; but after Epsilon, ΣT, that is to say, Sigma and Tau together, are inserted, and signify six. Then Zeta (Z) is used for seven; Eta (H), for eight; Theta (Θ), for nine; Iota (I), for ten. After this, Iota and Alpha together (IA) are used for eleven; Iota and Vita (IB), for twelve; and so on with the other letters and certain intercalations, which I omit for brevity's sake.

℣ *Beta.*

IN the second book of the *Epigrammata* of Martial, Alpha is used, as is said of the number of Greek letters, for principal and first, where it is written:—

> Quem non lacernis Publius meus vincit,
> Non ipse Codrus, Alpha penulatorum.*

* II, 57, 3. [41]

Ausonius, too, in his *Epigrammata,* where he writes, *Ad Eunum pædagogum Liguritorem,*† mentions Alpha; but I will pass him by, because his words are immodest, and go on to say that A, which is equivalent to Alpha, and which is written with the same character, is put first in the alphabetical order more fitly than any other letter.

† *Decimus Magnus Ausonius* (c. 310–394), *a Christian poet, tutor to the emperor Gratian. The Epigram referred to is* LXXI.

A Is a voice‡ & therefore is called a vowel, & must be pronounced,—as Martianus Capella says in his second book, *De Nuptijs Philologiæ,—Sub hiatu oris congruo solo spiritu;*[42] it must be pronounced with the mouth open, & with a suitable breathing. It may be a whole syllable, and sometimes a whole word, as well in Latin as in French. As we say in Latin: *Non auertas faciem tuam a me;* and in French: *On dit que lhomme a vingt ans beau peult estre. Il doibt aussi a trente, fort aparoistre.*

‡ '*Voix,*' *Latin, vox.* '*A vowel may be defined as voice* (*voiced breath*) *modified by some definite configuration of the superglottal passages.*'—SWEET, '*Primer of Phonetics,*' *quoted in* N. E. D.

A Is sometimes an interjection, & a manifestation of the love we have in our hearts for something to which we are inclined; and then it takes with & after it the sign of breathing; as in saying with Virgil:—

> Hic inter densas corylos, modo namque gemellos
> Spem gerens, ah, silice in nuda connixa reliquit;§

§ *Bucolics,* I, 14. [43]

and in French:—

> Ah, fringans yeulx volages et mondains
> Voz fins regards vous font [sont] de ioye plains.[44]

Priscianus, in his first book, wherein he treats *De accidentibus literæ,* tells us why the aspirate is placed after the vowel A, in the interjection *Ah,*

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